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Watershed Protection: A Project Focus

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Office of Water

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List of Figures, List of Tables, and List of Highlights**

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Foreword

The Watershed Protection Approach (WPA) is a departure from the way the EPA has traditionally operated its water quality programs and how federal, tribal, and state governments have typically approached natural resource management. Resource management programs--programs for wetlands protection, wastewater discharge permitting, flood control, farmer assistance, drinking water supply, fish and game management, and recreation--have tended to operate as individual entities and occasionally at cross purposes.

We now generally recognize that the critical environmental issues facing society are so intertwined that a comprehensive, ecosystem-based approach is required. We also recognize that solving environmental problems depends increasingly on local governments and local citizens. Thus, the need to integrate across traditional program areas (e.g., flood control, wastewater, land use) and across levels of government (federal, state, tribal, local) is leading natural resource management toward a watershed approach.

This document focuses on one aspect of the Watershed Protection Approach--developing watershed-specific programs or projects. It provides a blueprint for designing and implementing watershed projects including references and case studies for specific elements of the process. The document illustrates how the broader principles of watershed management--including all relevant federal, state, tribal, local and private activities--can be brought to bear on water quality and ecological concerns.

This document is one of two guides to watershed protection designed for state water quality managers. A second guide, *Watershed Protection: A Statewide Approach*, describes an emerging framework for a statewide Watershed Protection Approach that focuses on organizing and managing state resource management programs around a state's major watersheds, or basins.

I trust this Watershed Protection Approach document will provide a useful guide for state water quality managers and others involved in watershed-based activities as they adopt, implement and evaluate watershed protection programs.

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